

(Washington, DC)— Congresswoman Gwen Moore (D-Wisc.), Vice Chair of the Congressional Women's Caucus, last week joined caucus colleagues and Melanne Verveer, Ambassador-at-Large for the Department of State's Office of Global Women's Issues, for a breakfast discussion on international women's issues. The position of Ambassador-at-Large for Women's Issues was created by the Obama administration to coordinate foreign policy and activities relating to the political, economic and social advancement of women.

The group discussed the dramatic violence against women that continues to take place in armed conflicts, particularly in the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where women are being targeted and rape is being used as a strategic tool of war.

They also discussed the current political situation in Afghanistan, where women by-and-large have not been included in the country's governance and the decision-making processes of its leaders.

"The message ought to be that the security of our country is really dependent on our securing the rights and freedoms of women in Afghanistan and around the globe," Congresswoman Moore said. "Women are the canaries in the coal mine, and their status is a good indicator of the progress of the society in which they reside. If we can find a way to free women around the world from the economic, social, and political oppression that so many of them live under day after day— and help them to grow and prosper—it can only benefit their societies as a whole. After all, not only are women half the planet's population, but it is women who are the linchpins of stable community life around the world, so in helping to empower them we will be helping to alleviate the poverty and terrible chaotic conditions that allow extremism, violence, and terrorism to take root in the first place. We need to make a stronger appeal on women's behalf."

Ambassador Verveer and the members of the Women's Caucus pledged to continue working together on improving the status of women globally.



###